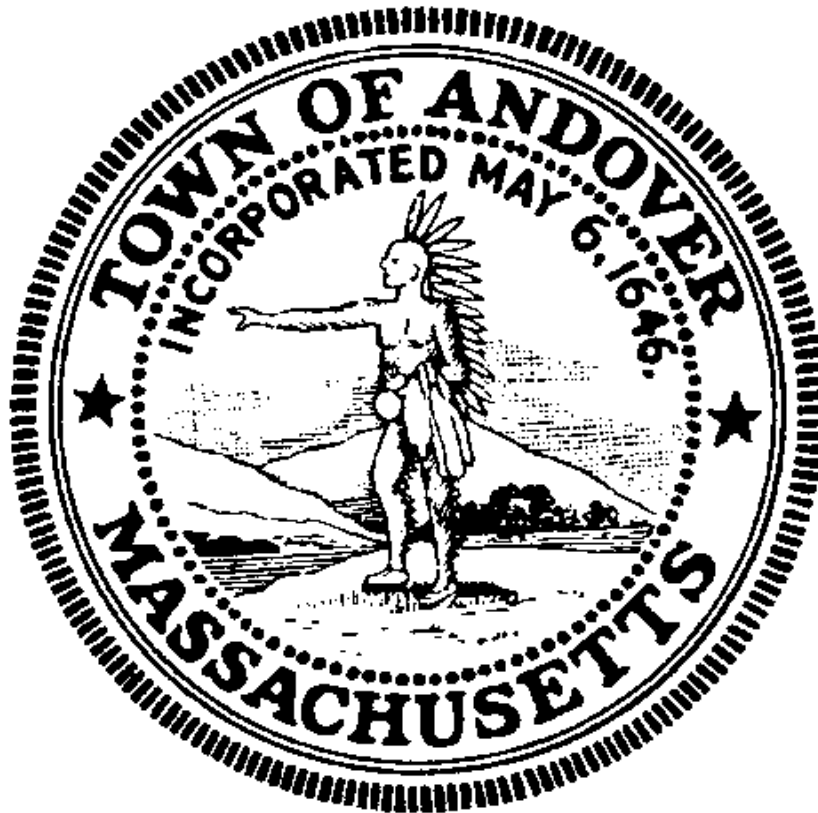


# **FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT**



**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING**  
**MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2023**

## SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

### **To the Voters in Andover Attending Town Meeting!**

#### **In preparing for this Special Town Meeting, please keep the following information in mind:**

**Voters:** Only voters who registered by the deadline (November 10<sup>th</sup>) will be allowed to vote at this Town Meeting. Voters will receive a sticker that must be worn in a visible location on their person to vote.

#### **PLAN TO ARRIVE EARLY**

All Town Meeting attendees must be checked into the meeting in the lobby of the Field House at the Andover High School on November 20<sup>th</sup>. Although a license is not required, having one handy will make the Check in Process go smoothly. Voters may check in at any table and receive a voter sticker; and this year **you will also receive your electronic voting device!**

#### **ELECTRONIC VOTING:**

This Special Town Meeting will be the first Town Meeting where the Voters of Andover will record their Town Meeting Votes through Electronic devices. **I encourage you to come early, as we will have a brief training session at the beginning of the meeting to be sure all voters are comfortable with the devices.** I look forward to this new tool that will allow for your privacy in voting, ensure accuracy in the tally of votes and less time to tabulate a vote.

**Non-Voters:** Non-voters may attend Town Meeting and will be seated in a special section. Non-voters must check in at the Town Clerk's table in the lobby to register before being seated. Please be aware that non-voters will not be seated until after 7:00 P.M. when they are voted admittance by Town Meeting and then only as room allows.

**Children:** Children may enter the meeting as non-voters. *See above.* Parents must attend small children during the meeting and sit with them in the designated non-voter section. Voters (with visible stickers) may vote from the non-voter section. Please notify the section counter if you are a voting member. No children or non-voters may sit in the registered voter sections.

Although all articles are important, I expect Article 7 will bring with it a significant amount of debate. I encourage you to attend this important meeting and hear the issues, weigh the merits with open minds and exercise your right to vote. ***No vote is more important than yours;*** don't waste it by not attending.

As you all know, I trust and count on the collective wisdom of the Town Meeting. I will do my best to move debate along, to be as fair as possible to all attendees and to finish the business before us in this session. I look forward to seeing you all on November 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.

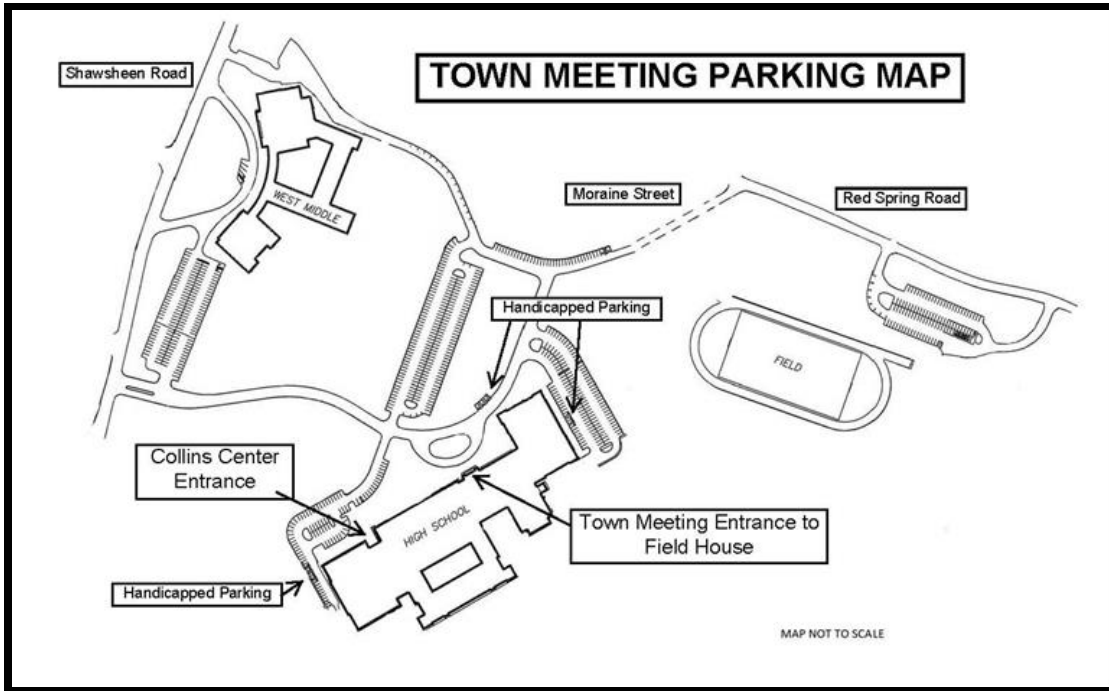
Sincerely,



Sheila M. Doherty  
Town Moderator

**RICHARD J. COLLINS FIELD HOUSE**  
**ANDOVER, HIGH SCHOOL**

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING PARKING MAP**



**Parking:** There are several parking lots available:

1. Lot beside the Field House
2. Red Spring Road
3. West Middle School Lot
4. Main Lot at the High School
5. Collins Center Lot



**TOWN OF ANDOVER**  
**36 BARTLET ST.**  
**ANDOVER, MA 01810**  
[www.andoverma.gov](http://www.andoverma.gov)

November 1, 2023

To the Citizens of Andover:

On Wednesday, October 11, 2023, a private citizen petitioned the Select Board for a Special Town Meeting (STM). Pursuant to state law, this required the Select Board to call a STM within 45 days of receiving the request. As such, our next STM will be held on **Monday, November 20, 2023 at 7:00 pm**. Since the original petition was received, 6 additional articles have been added to the final warrant for a total of 7 articles.

The Finance Committee (FinCom) has taken a position on **Articles 2, 3, 7A and 7B** as each could have a meaningful financial impact on the Town of Andover. In general, the FinCom's role is to receive the Town's budget from the Town Manager and Chief Financial Officer, review it and hold open meetings throughout the year for public consumption. This responsibility extends to issues of a financial nature that are proposed at a STM. The FinCom recommendations provided in this report are intended to help voters make well-informed decisions at the STM. Our goal is to recommend a budget that is fiscally responsible, sustainable, and clearly communicated.

Article 2 asks the Select Board to establish a new property tax limit for Andover residents who are 65 or older. To qualify senior residents must own and occupy the property as their domicile solely, jointly or as a tenant in common for 10 consecutive years.

While the FinCom supports financial assistance in the form of legally available tax exemptions and abatements for those seniors in need, Article 2 in its current form is pre-empted by Massachusetts General Law. According to guidance from Town Counsel, Article 2 would direct the Select Board to establish a tiered system for residential taxation under which qualifying seniors would be subject to a property tax ceiling distinct from all other residents. However, Article 89 Section 7 of the Massachusetts Constitution precludes municipal governments from altering state tax laws. Therefore, the Town must implement Massachusetts state laws with respect to taxation. Further, even if Andover was able to implement this change through a Home Rule Petition, there would be a significant financial impact to residents who are under 65 as they would now have to bear the burden of paying the taxes that this proposed group would no longer pay. Furthermore, there are many residents who are 65 or older, still working and are not in need of tax relief.

**As a result of these findings, the FinCom unanimously recommended disapproval of Article 2.**

**Article 3** asks the town to amend Article IV of the General By-Laws to provide funds sufficient to ensure that the health care premium contribution percentage paid by retired Andover public employees shall not exceed the percentage contribution paid by active Andover public employees. Article 3 would allow the Town Manager to utilize funds that have been appropriated to the Compensation Fund to reduce or maintain health care premiums for those Andover public employees that choose to retire before the age of 65 when they would be eligible for Medicare benefits.

It is the belief of the FinCom that Article 3 would largely undo the thoughtful decisions made in 2016 to reform retiree health insurance due to rising health care costs, growing liabilities and changing accounting regulations. By way of background, Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) represents the health insurance provided to the Town's retirees. Basically, the 2016 reform phased-in increases of health care insurance premiums for retirees under the age of 65 from 35% to 50% over four years. Without this much-needed refinement, the OPEB liability would have been \$651 million (M) in 2045. However, as a result of reforms

like this, the OPEB liability is expected to be fully funded by 2047 and is currently at \$104M, down from \$145M in FY2018. The savings from this change were then directed to the OPEB Trust, which currently has a fund balance of \$27M.

The FinCom concluded that Article 3 has the potential to increase our OPEB liability again, which could have a negative impact on the Town's bond rating, and as previously mentioned, reverse the thoughtful planning and reform decisions that were implemented in 2016.

**As a result of these findings, the FinCom unanimously recommended disapproval of Article 3.**

**Article 7A** asks the town to appropriate \$1.3M to pay for the professional schematic design that would be used to develop detailed plans and allow the AHSBC to determine the final cost for the construction of a new Andover High School (AHS).

The FinCom spent several long evenings in meetings with Town Officials, the Andover High School Building Committee, the School Committee, the Select Board and members of the community deliberating the financial impact of building a new high school. We also reviewed a sizable amount of data that projected what the financial health of Andover would look like if we undertake a project of this magnitude at this time. In the end, the FinCom was divided in our views on whether it makes sense for the Town to move forward with the schematic design phase of building a new high school.

**There were 6 members of the FinCom that recommended disapproval of Article 7A: Yican Cao, William Haskell, Paul MacKay, Brian Major, Andrew McBrien and Vice-Chair Kim Perry.**

**Here is how we came to the decision to recommend disapproval:**

We understand that Article 7A is not a proposal to embark on the construction of a new AHS, however, we do believe that it is a precursor to that end result. With this in mind, it was impossible for us to consider the \$1.3M appropriation of funds to complete the AHS schematic design without also evaluating how a project of this magnitude would impact the financial health of the Town of Andover. As such, we examined Andover's current debt profile, the impact on the Town's long-term bond rating and how this will affect Andover's taxpayers.

#### Current Debt Profile:

Andover currently has approximately \$338M in outstanding debt. The principal and interest payments represent approximately \$1,100 on the average single-family home that has a property value of \$858,000 and a current tax bill of \$11,733. Currently the Town has exempt debt service payments through FY2053, that includes 5 large projects: Wood Hill Middle School/High Plain Elementary School, the Public Safety Center, Bancroft Elementary School, the Pension Obligation Bond (POB) and the West Elementary/Shawsheen Preschool. In 5-7 years, the debt associated with Wood Hill/High Plain and the Public Safety Center will retire. In 15-17 years, the debt associated with Bancroft and the POB will retire. We will continue paying off West Elementary/Shawsheen Preschool for the foreseeable future. Assuming that we don't take on significant additional debt, we should have a vastly improved debt profile in 10 years, and be better equipped to take on the AHS project, which will require, at the current estimate, at least \$450M in bonded debt.

#### Impact on Andover's Long-Term Bond Rating:

Andover currently has the highest long-term municipal bond rating which is AAA. This benefits our community both financially and economically. Financially, our bond rating is an indication to the financial markets that Andover is a fiscally responsible partner, which means that they are more willing to loan us money at the lowest interest rates possible. Economically, being a AAA-rated municipality is a positive sign to the business community that Andover is an attractive place to conduct business. Bringing more commercial enterprises to Andover supports property tax revenue growth, which in turn, provides more funding to support our school and Town operations.

Standard & Poor's, our rating agency, indicated that if we take on significant additional debt now, then they would view our debt profile as weak. This would result in a long-term bond rating decrease. By lowering our bond rating, we would likely realize a negative borrowing interest rate impact of at least 0.25%. With current interest rates on borrowing at approximately 4.5% for tax exempt municipal bonds, any additional costs, even ¼ of a percentage point, makes determining what the Town can spend on borrowing for projects, very tenuous and uncertain. Even assuming a 0.25% increase, on the AHS project alone, would result in approximately \$26.2M in additional debt costs.

Affect on Andover's Taxpayers:

The AHS project threatens to increase the average tax bill by about 20% or approximately \$2,100 per year. Over the last 30 years, Andover's taxpayers have been very generous with appropriating money to build and/or renovate multiple schools, including AHS, as well as two brand new public safety buildings, our Library, the Robb Center, the Cormier Youth Center, Buster Deyermond Memorial Field, and numerous conservation projects. Never has this community asked its taxpayers to increase their property tax bills by 20% to fund just one project. We have people in this community who may struggle financially with such an increase because they live on fixed incomes or simply work hard just to make ends meet. It is our hope that with sound financial planning, all residents will have the opportunity to continue to call Andover home.

**There were 2 members of the FinCom that recommended approval of Article 7A: Aaron Buzay and Chair Paula Colby-Clements.**

**Here is how we came to the decision to recommend approval:**

**Chair Paula Colby-Clements's views are:** While there is no question that a \$450M project is a tremendous financial undertaking, this STM is not voting on whether to approve a full-scale project. The voters are being asked to appropriate a final \$1.3M to complete schematic design of a new high school. Residents voted in support of funds to engage in a feasibility study for a new AHS in 2021 when Town meeting voted to repurpose over \$1.2M, left over from the Bancroft School Project, to pay costs associated for an AHS Design Project. In 2022, Town meeting again voted to approve an additional \$1.5M for costs for the AHS Design Project.

From a strictly financial standpoint, Andover can afford to pay \$1.3M to complete the design process. The money will come from Free Cash. Having already approved over \$2.7M for design, it makes sense to complete the process so we have a final and fully refined cost of a new project. It also allows voters to weigh-in on the ultimate decision about whether to build a new high school now, or wait.

**Aaron Buzay's views are:** The AHS building committee has completed some, but not all, of the necessary steps to complete a comprehensive plan for a new AHS. During the feasibility and schematic design process, which voters approved funds for, the Andover High School Building Committee has developed a design that integrates the Andover Public Schools learning plan and community feedback, and then deliberated on what the final needs are--and how they transpose into an updated AHS. The purpose of this process is to ensure we have a facility that is competitive with other communities and meets the needs and expectations of Andover residents of a top-quality school district.

While many of the residents are focused on the final number—it is important to note that without funding the final \$1.3 million to complete schematic design, we fall short of having a final design complete with all associated costs. Without this, we are unable to compare the final costs of a high school with any interim plan. In addition, stopping before we complete schematic design sets back the process of community involvement, as it effectively stops any discussions or deliberations of a new AHS or the tradeoffs with other planning. It is critical that we proceed with the \$1.3M to complete this stage and allow the town to vote on a new high school or Interim Plan at the next Town Meeting.

**Ken Russo abstained from taking a position on Article 7A. He stated at the FinCom meeting on October 25, 2023 that he could not, in good conscience, tell people how to vote on this issue. His**

**position is that if you believe the full project should be approved, then vote to finish schematic design. If not, then vote against it.**

**Article 7B** asks the town to raise by taxation, borrowing or transfer from available funds the sum of \$500,000 for all items related to the schematic design of the AHS renovation. These funds would be used to begin the initial stage of developing a smaller, alternative plan to the larger project of constructing a new high school. This would be a bridge plan that allows for the use of the current AHS, along with investments in the physical building and investments that may help to remediate some educational impacts until a new AHS project can be undertaken.

Despite the FinCom’s differing views on Article 7A, we all recognize that AHS is in need of some renovations and mechanical system updates in order to extend the life of the building. With a heating and boiler system that is nearing 30 years old, issues such as these need to be addressed now. Article 7B would allow the Town to begin to formulate a plan on how to deal with fixing/updating these types of issues and help with remediating the educational impacts that we face in implementing a 21st century education in an old, outdated building.

**As a result of these findings, the FinCom unanimously recommended approval of Article 7B.**

## **IN CONCLUSION**

The FinCom is pleased to inform you that voting will be conducted electronically at the STM. Electronic voting is fast, accurate, secure, and most importantly, guarantees that your vote is confidential. Andover is joining the over 70 other towns in Massachusetts that already use electronic voting successfully.

We would also like to remind voters of the “FinComReport” link ([www.andoverma.gov/FinComReport](http://www.andoverma.gov/FinComReport)) where additional financial information and reference guides can be found.

We appreciate the concerted effort made by our colleagues who worked collaboratively through the abbreviated amount of time leading up to STM. Thank you to all who made themselves and their data available to assist us in the preparation of this report. Please note that the information used in this report was current when it went to print. Any data that may change prior to the STM will be identified and explained then.

Please join us at the Special Town Meeting on November 20, 2023. Your participation is very important.

The Finance Committee

Paula Colby-Clements, Chair

Kim Perry, Vice-Chair

Aaron Buzay  
Paul MacKay

Yican Cao  
Brian Major  
Ken Russo

William Haskell  
Andrew McBrien

**W A R R A N T**  
**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS**  
**ESSEX, SS.**

To Either of the Constables of the Town of Andover

Greeting:

In the name of the Commonwealth you are hereby required to notify and warn the Inhabitants of said Town who are qualified to vote in Town Affairs to meet and assemble at Andover High School, 80 Shawsheen Road, in said Andover, on

**MONDAY, THE TWENTIETH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 2023**

At seven o'clock P.M. to act upon the following articles:

<b>BALLOT QUESTION ON OPEN TOWN MEETING</b>
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**ARTICLE 1.** To see if the Town will adopt the following:

To see if the Town will authorize the Select Board to add the following non-binding ballot question related Open Town Meeting for the next Town local election:

Ballot Question

Would you be in favor or opposed to keeping Open Town Meeting, Town of Andover's current form of government?

Yes

Continue with the existing form of government where Town Meeting acts as the legislative body and the Select Board and Town Manager act together as the executive branch.

No

Andover voters want another form of government presently and in the future. Town officials will come back to the next Town Meeting with ballot question(s) for voters' consideration on future form of government.

<p><b>The following explanation was submitted by Petitioner(s):</b> The purpose of this article is to get the voters' input about our current form of local government. Issues with the currently used Open Town Meeting form of government include turnout that is so low it is essentially 'Representative Town Meeting' just with unelected representatives. The failure of Open Town Meeting is by design. With over 26,000 eligible voters, Andover simply can't have any significant voter participation and still have a functional 'Meeting'. Consider that in 2020 with a largely uncontested ballot, 76% of Massachusetts voters participated. Town Meeting would be a dysfunctional horror show long before reaching that level of participation. That's not just disheartening it's undemocratic. This article simply requests that we consult with the voters and listen to their input.</p>
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<b>Your Vote: Yes ___ No ___</b>
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**The SELECT BOARD voted 5-0 to recommend disapproval.**

*On petition of the Kathleen Grant and others*

**PROPERTY TAX LIMIT FOR ANDOVER RESIDENTS WHO ARE 65 OR OLDER**

**ARTICLE 2.** To see if the Town will adopt the following:

Direct the Select Board to establish a property tax limit for Andover residents who are 65 or older at the end of the previous taxable year. Qualifying residents must own and occupy the property as their domicile either solely, jointly or as a tenant in common for ten (10) consecutive years before the tax year begins. If the resident is a joint owner with another person who is not their spouse, the exemption will be equal to the qualifying resident's same ownership interest in the property. Effective on July 1, 2024 (Fy'25), the exemption shall provide that no qualifying senior shall pay more than a Two-and One- Half Percent (2.5%) increase in annual property taxes from the property tax imposed in the base year (Fy'24) regardless of any debt exclusion measures provided under MGL c. 59 s. 21C or any other property tax debt override measures authorized by the MGL. Property improvements by qualifying residents shall not be included in the two and one-half percent annual growth limitation. Qualifying residents holding a life estate in the property shall be the eligible; domiciles held in a trust shall be eligible if they are a trustee or co-trustee of that trust and have a sufficient beneficial interest in the domicile.

**The following explanation was submitted by Petitioner(s):** The article seeks to establish life time fiscal planning balance for Andover Seniors.

Qualifying residents over 65 will no longer live in fear of exorbitant tax increases from multi-million projects propelled by select vested interests.

Seniors currently face a daunting tax increase of \$2,500-\$3,000 annually for a \$500 million new high school. This is on top of their current average property tax of \$11,800. Under discussion is a ten -year plan in which taxes may even exceed \$15,000 a year. These projects are technically exempted from the protection residents receive under Proposition 2 & ½. This Article protects Andover seniors from incurring the burden from all large capital projects going forward.

In summary, the Article brings a well -known family plan to municipal spending...check your bank account before you buy your new car or remodel your kitchen.

This article puts an end to the open checkbook burden on seniors

<b>Financial Impact of Article 2</b>	
<i>Approval</i>	<i>Disapproval</i>
If there were a legal mechanism to allow this article it would require any tax savings incurred by residents who are 65+ to be shifted to those who are under 65. The aggregate amount of property tax that would be shifted to the other residents is not known, and at present there is no way for the town to calculate that number. If this article were to be applied, it would be a significant administrative process to determine, calculate, and implement such a tax shift. It would require all bills to be manually calculated and processed, and each parcel would have to be investigated to determine the age of the owner. It would likely require additional resources for the town.	No change in tax bill.

**Your Vote: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_**

**The SELECT BOARD voted 5-0 to recommend disapproval.**  
**The FINANCE COMMITTEE voted 9-0 to recommend disapproval.**

*On petition of the Michael Meyers and others*

**RETIREE HEALTH CARE PREMIUMS**

**ARTICLE 3.** To see if the Town will adopt the following:

To amend Article IV of the General By-Laws by adding at the end of Section 7 (a) (3) the following:

(4) Provide funds sufficient to ensure that the health care premium contribution percentage paid by retired Andover public employees shall not exceed the percentage contributions paid by active Andover public employees

**The following explanation was submitted by Petitioner(s):** The Article seeks to mitigate the prohibitive cost for health care insurance paid by retirees. The Article restores the health care insurance paid by retirees to the same percentage paid by active employees hired after July 1, 2017. The Select Board imposed an onerous revision to the contribution share in 2016 to balance their years of pension irresponsibility. Not surprisingly they took advantage of the most vulnerable population.

The average pension for the Andover retirees is \$43,170. The health care premium share for retirees with a spouse or family members under 65 is \$1,172/month.

This is a 250% increase from 2017 to 2023 for retirees living on a fixed income. This is in addition to the \$11,800 property tax burden for Andover residents. This is simply an inequitable and unsustainable abuse of our senior citizens.

The proposed change will enable retirees to depend upon a predictable and equitable cost structure.

<b>Financial Impact of Article 3</b>	
<i>Approval</i>	<i>Disapproval</i>
<p>Increase in town OPEB (Other Post Employment Benefits) liability, the obligation related to retiree health benefits.</p> <p>This would increase health insurance costs to the town over the following periods:</p> <p>1 Year: \$1.08M                      5 Years: \$5.85M            10 Years: \$12.97M                15 Years: \$21.63M            20 Years: \$32.17M</p> <p>Increasing the OPEB liability may also have a negative impact on the town's bond rating, increasing borrowing costs for the town.</p>	<p>No additional increase in health insurance costs or OPEB liability.</p>

**Your Vote: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_**

**The SELECT BOARD voted 5-0 to recommend disapproval.**  
**The FINANCE COMMITTEE voted 9-0 to recommend disapproval.**  
**The SCHOOL COMMITTEE voted 5-0 to recommend disapproval.**

*On petition of the Michael Meyers and others*

**TOWN MEETING SPEAKING LIMITS AND TIME CLOCK**

**ARTICLE 4.** To see it the Town will adopt the following:

To amend Article II of the General By-Laws by adding at the end of Section 1 the following:

“All town meetings and special town meetings shall provide equal presentation time for petitioner and total town presentations from town officers, boards, committees and consultants. A clock shall be mounted on the wall behind the moderator that is clearly visible to all meeting attendees to ensure equal time”.

**The following explanation was submitted by Petitioner(s):** This Article will bring transparency and accountability to Andover town meetings. Current parliamentary procedures in Andover are not obligated to follow any established or universally recognized parliamentary law or guidelines.

The moderator writes that her parliamentary procedures are by “custom and tradition.” Often this leads to improper measures being imposed by the majority in power to restrict the rights of individuals who are not part of the majority. There needs to be rules to go by. The rules cannot be at the caprice of the elected and appointed members sitting on the raised dais.

The recent 2022 debacle in which town officials were allowed to address the public 4 x longer than private petitioners was a disservice to the voters. This article will assist in creating a level playing field in which voters can hear both sides of the story. The clock on the wall will help assure equal representation.

Your Vote: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**The SELECT BOARD voted 5-0 to recommend disapproval.**

**The SCHOOL COMMITTEE voted 5-0 to recommend disapproval.**

*On petition of the Michael Meyers and others*

**REDUCE THE SPEED LIMIT ON SEVERAL ROADWAYS UNDER MUNICIPAL JURISDICTION**

**ARTICLE 5.** To see if the Town will petition the Massachusetts Department of Transportation to rescind the Special Speed Regulations for only the thickly settled or business district sections of the following roadways: Chandler Road, Dascomb Road, Harold Parker Road, Jenkins Road, Lovejoy Road, Main Street between the Shawsheen River to the north and School Street to the south, North Street, and River Road, thereby setting the statutory speed limit for those sections of the listed roadways to 25MPH (MGL c.90 §17C). The Town will also set a parks safety zone regulatory speed limit of 20MPH (MGL c.90 §18B) on that section of Harold Parker Road which is part of Harold Parker State Forest.

**The following explanation was submitted by Petitioner(s):** The residents living on these “thickly settled” roadways deserve an environment that is safe, pleasant, and free of massive cut-through non-resident traffic speeding through their neighborhoods every day. These roadways need to be part of Andover’s new townwide 25 MPH speed limit. The Andover Select Board should undertake appropriate action to make the **entire length of these thickly settled roadways** within Andover town limits to 25 MPH as defined under Mass General Laws c.90 Section 1, Definitions.

“Thickly settled or business district”, the territory contiguous to any way which is built up with structures devoted to business, or the territory contiguous to any way where the dwelling houses are situated at such distances as will average less than two hundred feet between them for a distance of a quarter of a mile or over.

Your Vote: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**The SELECT BOARD voted 5-0 to recommend disapproval.**

*On petition of the George Thorlin and others*

**ESTABLISH AND REPORT KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  
OF VEHICULAR TRAFFIC SAFETY**

**ARTICLE 6.** To see if the Town will create a panel of town officials, independent experts, and residents to monitor and report, on a quarterly basis, key performance measures of 1) the vehicular traffic safety on a minimum of 12 significant municipal roadways and 2) the town-wide enforcement of speed limits and other roadway safety regulations.

**The following explanation was submitted by Petitioner(s):** This Article is to establish a clear understanding of the current and future Traffic Safety challenges facing Andover. The Andover Select Board is asked to form a Transportation Board made up of town officials and interested residents to develop, analyze, and provide to the public Key Performance Indicators (KPIs/metrics) of Vehicular Traffic.

In the second part of this Article the town must undertake to enforce existing speed limits. Mass. General laws c.90 Section 17C, Establishment of 25-miles-per-hour Speed Limit in Thickly Settled... states: "... (b... The operation of a motor vehicle at a **speed in excess of the speed limited established under this section shall be in violation of Section 17**".

**Section 17 – Speed Limits** states "...operation of a motor vehicle at a rate of speed in excess of such limit shall be **prima facie evidence that such speed is greater than is reasonable and proper;...**"

Your Vote: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**The SELECT BOARD voted 5-0 to recommend disapproval.**

*On petition of the George Thorlin and others*

**ANDOVER HIGH SCHOOL SCHEMATIC DESIGN**

**ARTICLE 7A.** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate \$1,300,000 to pay costs of purchasing professional services related to the design, renovation and construction of Andover High School, including the payment of all costs incidental and related thereto, and to determine whether this amount shall be raised by taxation, borrowing, transfer from available funds or by any combination thereof, or take any other action related thereto.

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This funding request allows design of a proposed Andover High to be developed to the level of detail required for an accurate price estimation, which could be considered by voters at both a future town meeting and a future ballot box vote. Specifically, funding will allow completion of the "Schematic Design" phase which defines critical elements having an impact on project cost including building layout; floor plans; structural, mechanical, electrical and fire protection systems; materials selections; and a developed site plan.

This funding request is a culmination of more than a decade of study and discussions with the Andover community to address the condition of Andover High School and its effect on the education of our children. For the past 16 months, the AHS Building Committee has held over 30 public meetings; conducted 9 public forums; gained direct feedback of more than 100 educators; and met with numerous residents, students, student groups, community organizations and community members. The goal is to bring forth a fully formed proposal, reflecting a wide range of feedback, for a school that will serve the community for a minimum of 50 years.

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<b>Financial Impact of Article 7A</b>	
<i>Approval</i>	<i>Disapproval</i>
Reduces Free Cash by \$1.3M	\$1.3M available for fund balance/reserves or appropriation by a future Town Meeting.

Your Vote: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**The SELECT BOARD voted 3-2 to recommend approval.**  
**The FINANCE COMMITTEE voted 6-2-1 to recommend disapproval.**  
**The SCHOOL COMMITTEE voted 5-0 to recommend approval.**  
**The ANDOVER HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE voted 10-0 to recommend approval.**

*On request of the Andover High School Building Committee*

**ARTICLE 7B.** To see if the Town will vote to raise by taxation, borrowing, or transfer from available funds or by any combination thereof and appropriate the sum of \$500,000 for the purpose of purchasing services and materials related to the Andover High School Renovation Schematic Design, including any other costs incidental and related thereto, or to take any other action related thereto.

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Article 7B provides funds to complete feasibility and design studies related to an interim approach for maintaining Andover High School. This approach would include improvements that are intended to bridge the gap between the existing building and a new building at some point in the future. This article would provide funds to explore designing detached modular classrooms to alleviate overcrowding, expanding the cafeteria, designing new mechanical systems to address building discomfort, improving building security, and making improvements to pavement and concrete around the building and grounds. This plan may also explore studying expanded field space on-and-off site because of the potential addition of modular classrooms. This approach would provide the best opportunity to preserve the town's bond rating in the immediate term, while making the critical improvements to the facility. The design project would be managed by the Permanent Town Building Advisory Committee which would include representation from school administration, town administration, the Andover High School Building Committee and the School Committee.

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<b>Financial Impact of Article 7B</b>	
<i>Approval</i>	<i>Disapproval</i>
Reduces Free Cash by \$500,000	\$500,000 available for fund balance/reserves or appropriation by a future Town Meeting.

Your Vote: Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**The SELECT BOARD voted 4-1 to recommend approval.**  
**The FINANCE COMMITTEE voted 9-0 to recommend approval.**  
**The SCHOOL COMMITTEE voted 5-0 to recommend approval.**  
**The ANDOVER HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING COMMITTEE voted 10-0 to recommend approval.**

*On request of the Select Board*



**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

*Tracey E. Spruce – Chair*  
*Lauren M. Conoscenti, Ph.D. – Vice Chair*  
*Emily DiCesaro*  
*Susan K. McCready*  
*Sandis Wright*

**Magda Parvey, Ed.D.**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

To the Andover Community,

November 2023

At this Special Town Meeting, voters are being asked to consider two articles relevant to addressing the facility needs of Andover High School.

Article 7A would authorize appropriation of the remaining funds to complete the schematic design process for a new Andover High School as studied and recommended by the Andover High School Building Committee to address overutilization of the building, undersized educational spaces, poor building conditions, and modernization to deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century educational programs and meet current Massachusetts curriculum standards. Completion of schematic design is the culmination of the building committee’s work, as approved by the School Committee in 2022, and will provide detailed information about the actual cost to construct a new high school.

The School Committee supports the plan to pursue a new high school project under the direction of the Town Manager with oversight by the Andover High School Building Committee, and to further that work, which began seven years ago under the AHS Facility Study Committee, we recommend approval of Article 7A. Completion of the schematic design work is the only way we will learn the actual construction cost. However, we recognize that the preliminary cost estimate is cause for concern by some residents. In our continued partnership with the town and manager, the Committee supports Article 7B to authorize the appropriation of \$500,000 for a detailed study to be conducted, with the understanding the study will be undertaken by the Permanent Town Building Committee including representation from the School Committee, Andover Public Schools Administration, and the Andover High School Building Committee. The committee would define a plan for short-term relief of identified educational and building systems issues and would require, as provided under Massachusetts General Law and Section 10(f) of Andover’s Town Charter, the review and approval of the School Committee before any project could commence.

Our recommendation to approve Article 7B should not be interpreted as expressing the view that Article 7B proposes an acceptable alternative or complete solution to resolving all of the educational, environmental, and facility challenges in the current high school building. Article 7B does not propose to do this, and it is important for voters to understand that any plan produced as a result of Article 7B will not do this. Nor does our recommendation indicate that we believe the Andover High School Building Committee (and, before them, the Andover High School Facility Study Committee) failed to take into account any reasonable, less costly solutions. We believe the members of those respective committees considered every possible option. Nonetheless, we feel Andover residents will benefit from and deserve the additional information an Article 7B study will produce, and we believe the work to be funded under both Article 7A and Article 7B should proceed in parallel – not as alternatives. We believe the results of this work will provide residents with the opportunity to make informed decisions in the future.

The School Committee’s most important function is to provide for the education of Andover’s children, and we recognize that the effective education of children is dependent upon many factors, including an appropriate physical environment. We are thankful to the residents of Andover for their continued commitment to an exemplary educational experience for Andover students.

Sincerely,

Tracey E. Spruce, Chairperson

**TOWN OF ANDOVER**

**TOWN MEETING PROCEDURE AT A GLANCE**

<b>To do this...</b>	<b>You say this.....</b>	<b>May you Interrupt Speaker?</b>	<b>Must you Be Seconded?</b>	<b>Is the Motion Debatable?</b>	<b>What vote is required?</b>
Request Information	Point of Information	Yes	No	No	No Vote
Complain about noise, sound, general room conditions, etc....	Point of Privilege	Yes	No	No	No vote
Object to procedure or personal affront	Point of order	Yes	No	No	No vote Chair decides
Introduce Business <i>(a primary motion)</i>	I move that.....	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
Ask for a vote count to verify a vote	I call for a standing count...	No	No	No	No Vote
Amend a motion	I move to amend this motion	No	Yes	Yes	Majority
End Debate <i>Can be denied by Moderator at his/her discretion</i>	I move the question	No	Yes	No	2/3 vote
Reconsider something already disposed of	Meeting only reconsiders a vote if an error has occurred				Chair corrects with proper vote
Recess the meeting	I move that we recess until....	No	Yes	No	Majority
Adjourn the meeting	I move we adjourn	No	Yes	No	Majority

*Town of Andover  
36 Bartlet Street  
Andover, MA 01810*

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***PLEASE BRING THIS REPORT WITH YOU TO TOWN MEETING***

**Monday, November 20, 2023  
7:00PM**

**RICHARD J. COLLINS FIELD HOUSE  
ANDOVER HIGH SCHOOL**